

POST GAME QUOTES
Saturday, March 23, 2023
LAFC VS. Nashville SC



STEVE CHERUNDOLO
LAFC HEAD COACH

Re: “To come out like this tonight, to see the way that the attack flowed, the way that you guys were able to look a little but like the LAFC we have seen that past few years, and also able to see Denis kinda break out - can you address all that?”

“I will try to break that down. Sure, I think the last couple of weeks have been difficult, I thought their pre-season was a normal preseason - you’re progressing and working towards a goal or certain goals in certain places in the game. I thought even though they had a week less than most teams, I think our pre-season was short and sharp and we achieved our objectives. We were able to see most of that against Seattle. Then obviously a complete break of everything in Salt Lake. And then against Kansas City - okay a lot of effort, but what we saw not exactly what we were happy with, and that continued in Minnesota. Then that brings us to today. During the week we talked about key elements of our game that make us good, and when we get back to that we talked about positional integrity, playing in a disciplined manner for 90 minutes, and don’t really need to talk about scoring goals and creating chances - that is something that is in our DNA, it is something we do every day in training and that comes when your defensive organization is proper and disciplined and organized. That usually takes care of the offensive work when you recover the ball. And that’s what I saw tonight.”

Re: “And Denis? It’s got to feel good for him.”

“Yeah he was close and if you look at stats, he should have scored already in the first couple of games, the past couple games, but he did tonight - scored a couple more. But I thought his overall effort, his decision making with the ball, when to pass, when to dribble and shoot himself - was phenomenal. His effort was there and I think you saw it - very aggressive player, a player that the league got to know, fear, and respect, and that’s what we saw hear tonight.”

Re: “Coach with Omar on international duty, Sergi got the start today, can you talk about his performance and what he gave here over the course of his time out there?”

“Excellent performance from him tonight. He brought an energy and aggressiveness and a calmness and a load of experience as well, that he already has - he brought that to the team tonight, and that’s something we desperately needed. And he was fantastic. Sitting on a yellow card and I know how aggressive he can get also in training, which made us a little nervous that he could get a second, but certainly his performance was one of the best he’s had and we’re very happy with that and we would love to use him more. Certainly a luxury for any coach to have a player like that, who has come from the bench more often than he’s started, but I’m certain you’ll see more of that Sergi and more often and frequently this season.”

Re: “There has been growing rumors about Olivier Giroud coming to the club - is there anything you can talk about and if not, how would you see a player like Drew if he were to come to LAFC and fit in the style of play?”

“I can’t talk about it, maybe you can rope John Thorrington here and he can expand on your question a little bit, but any player of that caliber will help any team. He has obviously proven a lot in his career - he is a true reference, a true 9, certainly a position of a player we are looking for. I think any player of that caliber would help us and any MLS team.”

Re: “Seems tonight there was much more poise and patience in the group, in the buildup, allowing runners to get to the back post and create some dangerous chances - is this more of what you want to see from your group tonight? Is this what you would expect from them? Why do you think they settled in tonight.”

“Yeah, I guess I shouldn’t say this as a coach but very rarely do things work out in games that we work out during the week but this week was one of them. It’s exactly what we worked on - having a little more patience, building the game from the back to the middle and then in the final third. It’s called building for a reason, you’re preparing your attack. I thought the boys did a great job tonight preparing each attack and waiting for the right moment to break lines, to break the final line, and then obviously to attack the goal. So more patience. I would say a little more cleverness as well - when to go and when to put your foot on the brakes. So we were quite happy with that and it was a small step tonight - some things went really well, some things we will still need to improve on, and we will address that this week.”

Re: “Kind of expanding on that specifically on Denis though - last season, when he had a couple of games without scoring, there was a lot of talk about he’s thinking too much, he needs to just not think and play freely. Is that kind of what you were talking about this week? Is there anything you were focused on to get him back on the score sheet? Or was it simply, we know Denis is going to get back on the score sheet; this isn’t unusual.”

“Actually just the opposite of what you described - he needs to think more and react less. Yes, he is an instinctual player and some players have that element of surprise, creativity, however you want to categorize it, but Denis needs to stay within our structure, and he did that. He was fantastic tonight. And when he does, and when everybody does - we buy into one single idea and not 11 different ideas - every individual looks stronger. And that was the objective this week. When I told the boys before the game, if we can achieve that, we will be happy, and sure enough I saw a lot of smiles in the locker room.”

Re: “David Martinez gets his first assist tonight - can you talk a little bit about what he brought into the group at such a young age?”

“Yeah, very young - just turned 18, moved to a foreign country, in a crazy, wonderful city like LA - all balled into one. So it’s been a lot going on in his life right now, and I was speaking to Ante and Mark on the bench and I remember what I was doing at that age and it wasn’t what he’s doing. So we’re very patient with him but I think everyone sees his ability and his talent is phenomenal. We will progress David along as fast as we can, but always keeping an eye on the

person, making sure he's progressing as well and happy and settled in, because he has a lot of potential and is going to be a phenomenal player in this league and hopefully elsewhere."